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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: SENIOR MOFA OFFICIAL DOWN ON DPJ PRESIDENT OZAWA

Classified By: James P. Zumwalt, Charge d'Affaires, a.i.; Reasons: 1.4
(b/d)

¶1. (C) In a September 9 dinner with the Charge, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) North American Bureau Director General Shinichi Nishimiya gave an overwhelmingly negative assessment of the immediate future of the U.S.-Japan Alliance in the event opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa were to become Prime Minister. Nishimiya stated his personal view that the Alliance will suffer in general under an Ozawa-led government, particularly with respect to host nation support (HNS), the U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), and Japan's refueling operations in the Indian Ocean in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). According to Nishimiya, Ozawa has been planning for some time to re-engineer HNS and to seek revision of the SOFA. Furthermore, if in control of the government, Ozawa would likely prevent the introduction of a bill to extend Japan's contributions to OEF.

¶2. (C) Nishimiya added that, to cement his control of the government, Ozawa will attempt to "break" the bureaucracy by instituting a requirement for all DGs in Japanese government ministries and agencies to tender their resignation with the change in government. This "loyalty test" will allow Ozawa to plant his loyalists from among senior career bureaucrats in places where he wants to exercise the greatest amount of control on policy issues. Nishimiya cautioned that Embassy and visiting U.S. officials should pay no heed to "feel-good" messages from moderate, pro-Alliance DPJ lawmakers such as Rep. Seiji Maehara because they will not be in positions of influence if the opposition defeats the ruling coalition in the upcoming general elections.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: Party supporters of Ozawa, including DPJ Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama and Rep. Keiichiro Asao, have also been vocal critics of the perceived inequities of HNS and the popular misperception that Japan is disadvantaged in terms of judicial process in crimes involving members of the U.S. military. Nevertheless, it is too early to tell how the DPJ's foreign and security policy position will evolve if it wrests power from the ruling coalition or whether Ozawa would even assume the position of Prime Minister. END
COMMENT.
ZUMWALT